



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois
Western Division*

*Michael F. Iasparro
Assistant U.S. Attorney*

*308 West State Street - Room 300
Rockford, Illinois 61101*

*PH: (815) 987-4444
FAX: (815) 987-4236*

April 15, 2005

MAN SENTENCED TO 272 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR ARMED ROBBERIES OF FIRST FEDERAL BANK AND UNION SAVINGS BANK IN ROCKFORD

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ROBERT D. GRANT, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and STEVEN PUGH, Chief of the Rockford Police Department, today made the following announcement:

United States District Court Judge Philip G. Reinhard today sentenced **JOSEPH H. POOLE**, 54 (DOB: 12/29/50), to 272 months in federal prison without parole for the armed robbery of First Federal Bank, 3402 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois, on September 13, 2002, using a firearm during that robbery, and aiding and abetting the armed robbery of the Union Savings Bank, 203 North Alpine Road, Rockford, Illinois, on November 21, 2003. The court also ordered Poole to pay restitution of \$3,250 to First Federal Bank and \$9,440 to Union Savings Bank, and a \$500 fine, and ordered that Poole be placed on supervised release for five years following his release from prison.

Poole was found guilty by a jury of the charges on January 7, 2005, following a four-day trial in federal court. Evidence presented at trial established that on the afternoon of September 13, 2002, Poole, armed with a semi-automatic pistol, went into the First Federal Bank and approached a teller. Poole handed the teller a bag and told her to give him all of the money. After the teller put the bank's money into the bag, Poole took the bag and walked out of the front door of the bank.

Evidence at trial further established that on November 21, 2003, Poole, along with his co-defendants **JAMES L. NOVAK**, 55 (DOB: 2/10/50), and **RALPH F. BEILKE**, 45 (DOB: 5/5/58), decided to rob the Union Savings Bank. Novak went inside the bank and approached the teller counter. He pulled a handgun from his waistband and pointed it at a teller. Novak ordered the teller to give him all the money and not to push any buttons or he would start shooting. After the teller complied, Novak fled the bank with the money and got into a stolen SUV being driven by Beilke. Beilke and Novak drove to the parking lot of a nearby fitness center where they met Poole. Beilke and Novak got into Poole's vehicle and all three drove away.

Poole, Novak, and Beilke had been indicted on February 10, 2004. Novak pleaded guilty in federal court in Albuquerque, New Mexico to the armed robbery of the Union Savings Bank, using a firearm during the robbery, and being a felon-in-possession of a firearm. Beilke pleaded guilty in federal court in Rockford to the armed robbery of Union Savings Bank and using a firearm in connection with the robbery. Both Beilke and Novak are awaiting sentencing.

The case was investigated by the Rockford Office of the FBI and the Rockford Police Department. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorneys Michael F. Iasparro and Joseph C. Pedersen.

#####